

Madam Speaker,

HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt is about to begin a 100 day PR effort to build support for the President's health care proposal. Democrats here in Congress want to work towards reducing the number of uninsured. Unfortunately, the tax deduction proposal will do very little to assist the 47 million Americans who are now living without health insurance.

The President touts his plan as a way to give low-income uninsured Americans more money in their pockets to help them buy their own health insurance. It sounds good, but the President ignores two facts.

First, the President's plan does not provide enough of a benefit to low-income Americans. A tax deduction is of little value to low-income workers, who in many cases would receive little more than \$1,200 a year back from the federal government. That might sound like a lot, but health insurance costs the average family more than \$11,000 a year. This small tax deduction will continue to make health care out of reach.

Madam Speaker, unfortunately the President's proposal is not the right approach.

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